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Sen. McManus: Haste makes waste; Michigan residents and vintners deserve better than House Bill 4959

LANSING – Michigan wineries and Michigan residents deserve a thorough review of the wine direct shipment issue, not a hasty “solution” that will likely do more harm than good, said state Sen. Michelle McManus, reacting to news that a direct shipping ban was approved by a House committee on Tuesday.

“The expression ‘haste makes waste’ could not be more appropriate here,” said McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. “Many small Michigan wineries have told us this legislation would deliver a fatal blow to their businesses. This so-called ‘solution’ would only create more problems than it seeks to solve.”

The House Regulatory Reform Committee on Tuesday approved House Bill 4959 and sent it to the full House for consideration. The bill would ban a winemaker or small winemaker from directly shipping wine to any person in the state for personal consumption or for any noncommercial purpose.

McManus expressed her disappointment that two individuals did not have the opportunity to testify at Tuesday’s hearing. Time did not permit Donald Coe, president of WineMichigan, and Michael Brenton, who serves on the steering committee for WineCAM (Wine Consumers Across Michigan) to appear before the committee.

“If supporters of this ban truly want to work with the vintners and seek compromise, they would not be rushing to ban direct-shipped wine. The fact that Don Coe was not able to testify today on legislation that would so negatively impact his industry is a real disappointment,” McManus said. “We owe it to Michigan residents and vintners to give this issue a thorough review and find a solution that addresses everyone’s concerns.”

The Supreme Court recently struck down laws in Michigan and New York that allowed in-state wineries to ship wine to consumers while banning shipments from outside the state. Michigan must now update its laws to comply with the decision.

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